United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
COOS BAY DISTRICT OFFICE
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5400/1792 (OR-120)
EA No. OR128-08-02

May 8, 2008

SCOPING DOCUMENT

Dear Citizen:

This information and the enclosed maps briefly describe a Proposed Action for the development of the King Myrtle Environmental Assessment (EA).

The USDI, Bureau of Land Management, Coos Bay District Office is preparing an Environmental Assessment for multiple timber sales that would occur within the Middle Fork Coquille River fifth field watershed. The proposed action would treat approximately 1,300 acres of 30-80 year old plantations through commercial thinning and density management thinning.

Forest treatments would occur in the General Forest Management Area (GFMA) portions of the Matrix Land Use Allocation (LUA) and within the Riparian Reserve LUA as defined in the 1995 Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision (RMP/ROD).

Project Summary

Commercial Thinning would occur within GFMA stands and use a "thin from below" prescription. Density management within Riparian Reserves would receive a slightly different treatment to achieve results for the different management objectives for this LUA.

The timber sales are expected to be sold in Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010 and would contribute approximately 13 million board feet to the decadal Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) for the Myrtlewood Field Office. No hardwood conversions are planned, although some hardwoods within the proposed units would be thinned.

Stand exams on all proposed units were conducted in 2007; the results have provided data on the current condition and are being used to develop the individual thinning prescriptions.

The King Myrtle project would also include constructing roughly 4 miles of new roads, management of road systems by renovating or improving approximately 8 miles of existing roads, decommissioning of selected roads, and limiting access to selected roads. It is possible that some new road construction may occur within Riparian Reserves and include stream crossings. The ID team will determine whether newly constructed roads would be of a permanent or temporary nature.

Some of the proposed treatment units are adjacent to unsurveyed suitable Marbled Murrelet habitat. Surveys to determine occupancy began in May 2008 for selected sites.

This project may incorporate data and recommendations from the Middle Fork Coquille, Sandy-Remote, and Big Creek Watershed Analyses.

Location

The Project Area includes the Belieu Creek, Indian Creek, and Rock Creek Sub-watersheds and the Lower Myrtle Creek drainage of the Myrtle Creek Sub-watershed.

The King Myrtle Project Area is located about 30 miles southeast of Coos Bay, Oregon and is bisected by State Highway 42. The total analysis area is 57,871 acres in size. The proposed harvest activities are located in T. 29 S., Ranges 12W, 11W, and 10W; and T. 30 S., Ranges 11W and 10W, Willamette Meridian.

The following two tables show the land ownership within the project area, as well as the BLM Land Use Allocations.

Table 1: Ownership within the Analysis Area

Sub-watershed/ *Drainage*	Private Acres	Coquille Indian Tribe Acres	BLM Acres	USFS Acres	Total Acres
Belieu Creek	6834	146	4282	0	11262
Indian Creek	10,303	675	4439	0	15417
Rock Creek	20,130	1342	2931	1124	25,527
Lower Myrtle Creek	4984	240	441	0	5665
Totals	**42,251**	**2403**	**12,093**	**1124**	**57,871**

Table 2: LUA of BLM acres in the Analysis Area

GFMA	LSR	Connectivity	Other *	Total Acres
9560	1864	659	10	12,093

*Represents the Bridge Maintenance Shop – Administratively Withdrawn

Need for the Project

Within the analysis area, the GFMA stands are characterized by uniform structure, heavy stocking, slowing growth rate, and low stand vigor. Research indicates that stands that develop at very high densities are susceptible to diameter growth stagnation and instability. Without treatment at the appropriate time, these dense stands rapidly decline in growth and vigor. This results in a stagnant stand that becomes more susceptible to wind, insects, disease, and fire disturbances.

Riparian Reserve (RR) stands in this project are in the same over-stocked condition. Left untreated, these stands would not achieve the desired vegetation characteristics envisioned in the Aquatic Conservation Strategy in the Northwest Forest Plan. Reducing stand density is required in order to maintain a growth trajectory, improve stand stability, and meet the Riparian Reserve objectives.

Project Objectives (Purpose)

Any Action alternative to be given serious consideration as a reasonable alternative must meet the objectives provided in the ROD/RMP for projects to be implemented in the planning area. The ROD/RMP and applicable statutes specify the following objectives to be accomplished in managing the lands in the project area:

1. Provide a sustainable supply of timber and other forest commodities to provide jobs and contribute to community stability (p.22) by:
    - Conducting timber harvest and other silvicultural activities in that portion of the Matrix with suitable forest lands (p.22).
    - Selecting logging systems based on the suitability and economic efficiency of each system for the successful implementation of the silvicultural prescription, for protection of soil and water quality, and for meeting other land use objectives (p.52).
    - Providing timber sale volume toward the Coos Bay District Allowable Sale Quantity as required in the Oregon and California Act (O&C Act) of August 28, 1937. The BLM has a statutory obligation under the O&C Act to manage suitable commercial forest lands revested by the government from the Oregon and California Railroad grant (O&C lands) for permanent forest production in accordance with the sustained yield principle.

2. Manage developing stands on available lands to promote tree survival and growth and to achieve a balance between wood volume production, quality of wood, and timber value at harvest (p.52) by:
    - Applying silvicultural systems that are planned to produce, over time, forests with desired species composition, structural characteristics, and distribution of seral or age classes (p.53).
    - Basing silvicultural treatments and harvest designs on the functional characteristics of the ecosystem and the characteristics of each forest stand site. Treatments would be designed – as much as possible – to prevent the development of undesirable stand characteristics (p.53).

3. Manage the riparian-dependent resources to maintain the existing condition or implement actions to restore conditions by:
    - Applying silvicultural practices for Riparian Reserves to control stocking, re-establish and manage stands, and acquire desired vegetation characteristics (p.13).

4. Protect, manage, and conserve federally listed and proposed species and their habitats to achieve their recovery in compliance with the Endangered Species Act, approved recovery plans, and the Bureau Special Status Species Program (p.32) by:
    - Providing for important ecological functions such as dispersal of organisms, carryover of some species from one stand to the next, and maintenance of ecologically valuable structural components such as down logs, snags, and large trees (p.22)

You are invited to submit written comments on any issues or concerns you may have regarding this project by June 7, 2008. Comments which are helpful to the analysis process are those which identify new scientific or technical information, determine the scope of issues to be addressed, and express site-specific concerns related to the proposed action. Opinions agreeing or disagreeing with current laws and policies are not helpful in refining the proposed action.

Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the above address during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays, and may be published as part of the EA document or other related documents. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

The EA interdisciplinary team will use your comments, along with their own professional expertise, to further develop a Proposed Action, alternative actions, and design features. The Proposed Action and alternatives will then be analyzed and the results documented in an EA as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. If the EA results in a FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact), this document is anticipated to be available for review in December of 2008. A copy of the EA will be sent to those that request it or are on the District's mailing list to receive an EA. It will also be posted on the District's web site: http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/coosbay.

Please direct your responses or questions to Aimee Hoefs, Myrtlewood Field Office, 1300 Airport Lane, North Bend, OR 97459, call (541) 756-0100, FAX: (541) 751-4303. OR_CoosBay_Mail@blm.gov

Respectfully,

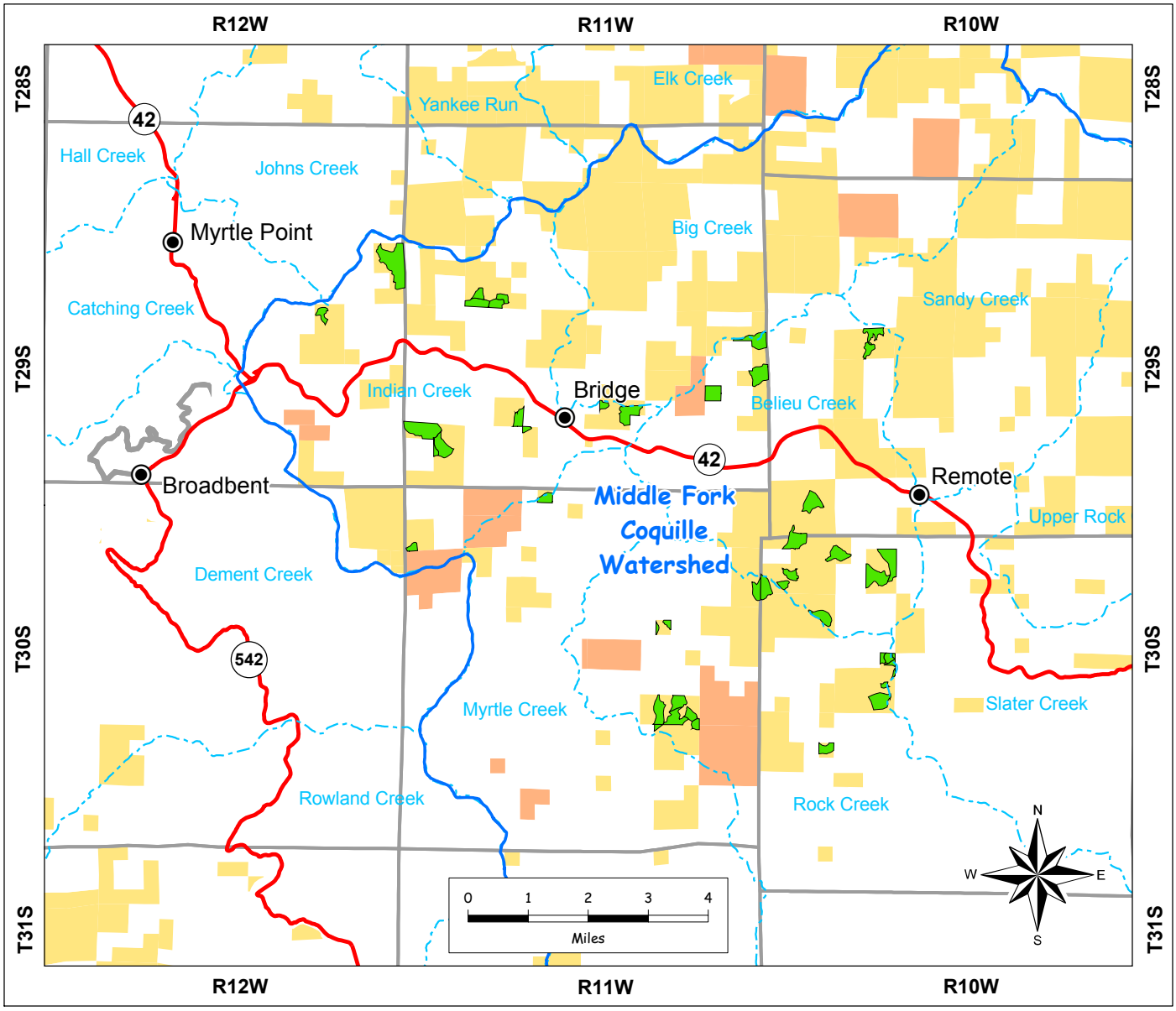
Paul T. Flanagan

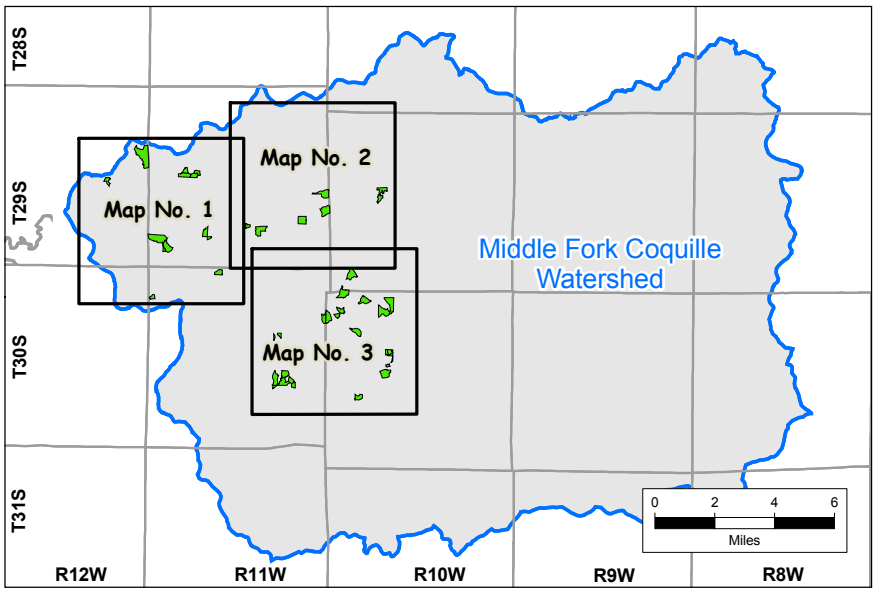
Paul T. Flanagan
Myrtlewood Field Manager

Attachment:
Vicinity Map
Scoping Maps 1-3

King Myrtle EA OR128-08-02

Vicinity Map





Map Features

- State Highway
- Subwatershed Boundaries
- Middle Fork Coquille Watershed
- Unit Boundary
- BLM Administered Land
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Private / Other Ownership

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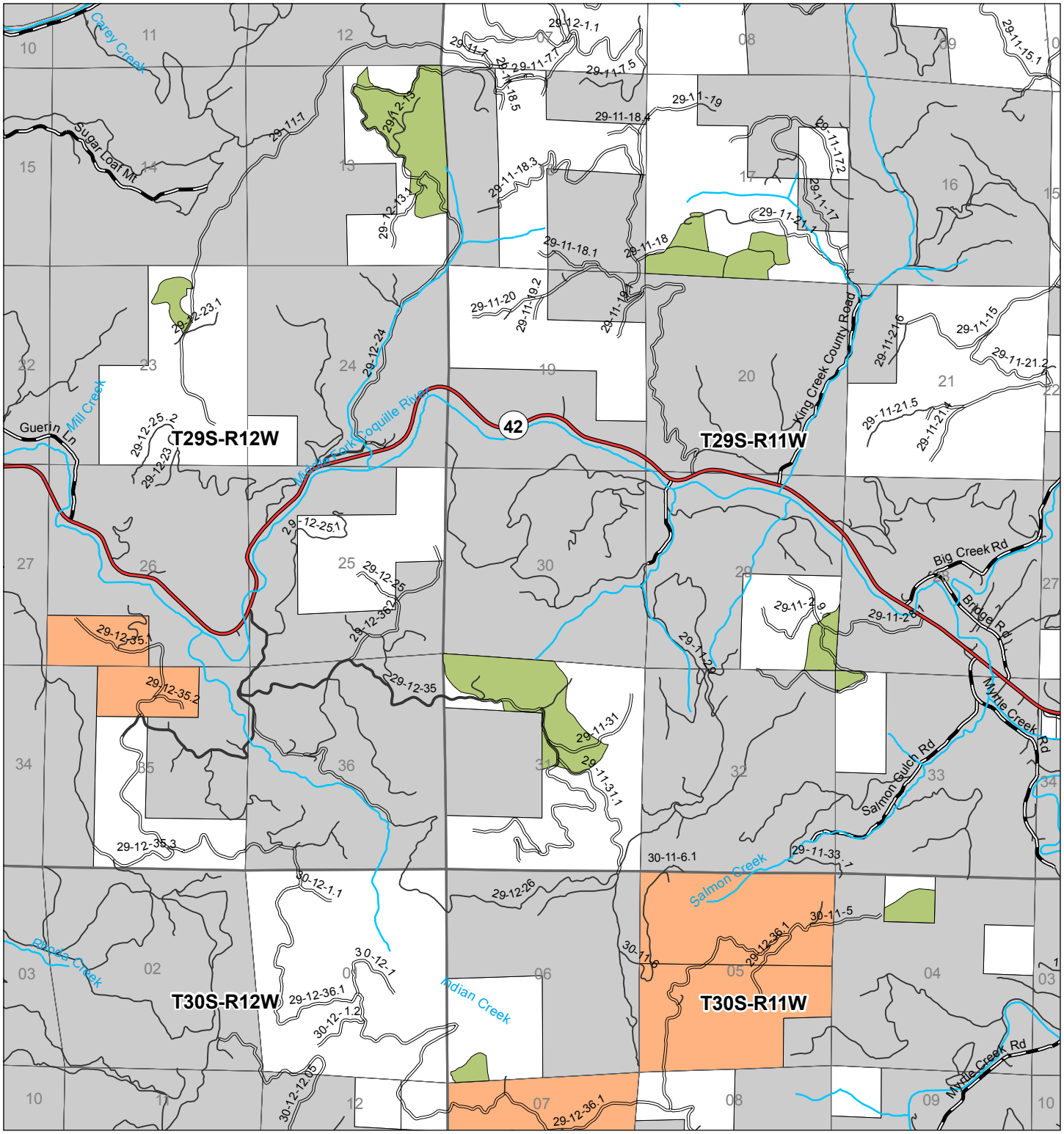
Scoping Map 1 of 3



Map Features

(Not all map features necessarily occur in the area mapped above.)

- Highway
- County Road
- Paved Road
- Gravel Road
- Natural/Unk Surfaced Road
- Fish-bearing Stream
- Unit Boundaries
- BLM Administered Land
- Coquille Forest
- Private / Other Ownership

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Myrtlewood Resource Area

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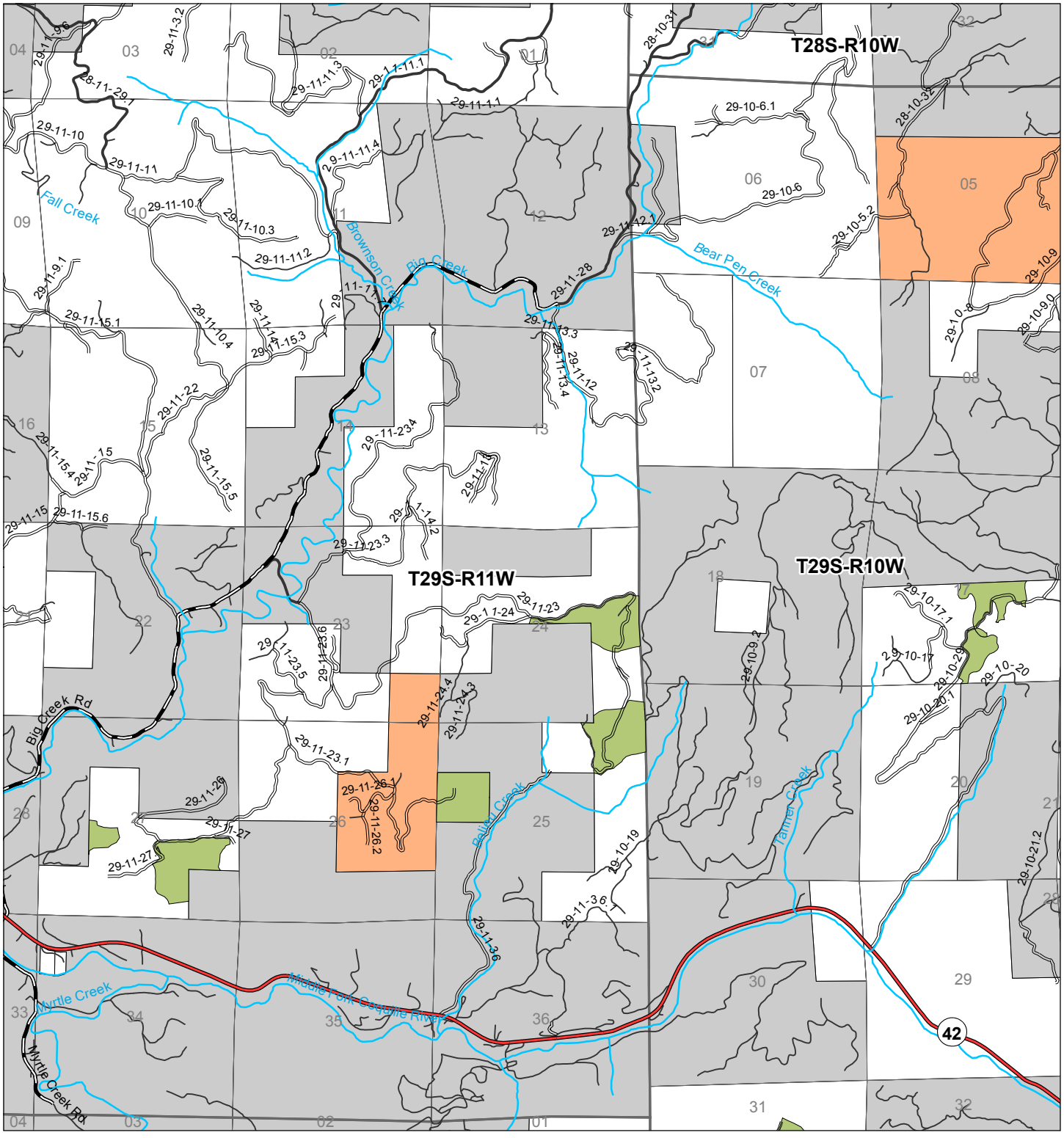
Miles

King Myrtle EA OR128-08-02

Scoping Map 2 of 3



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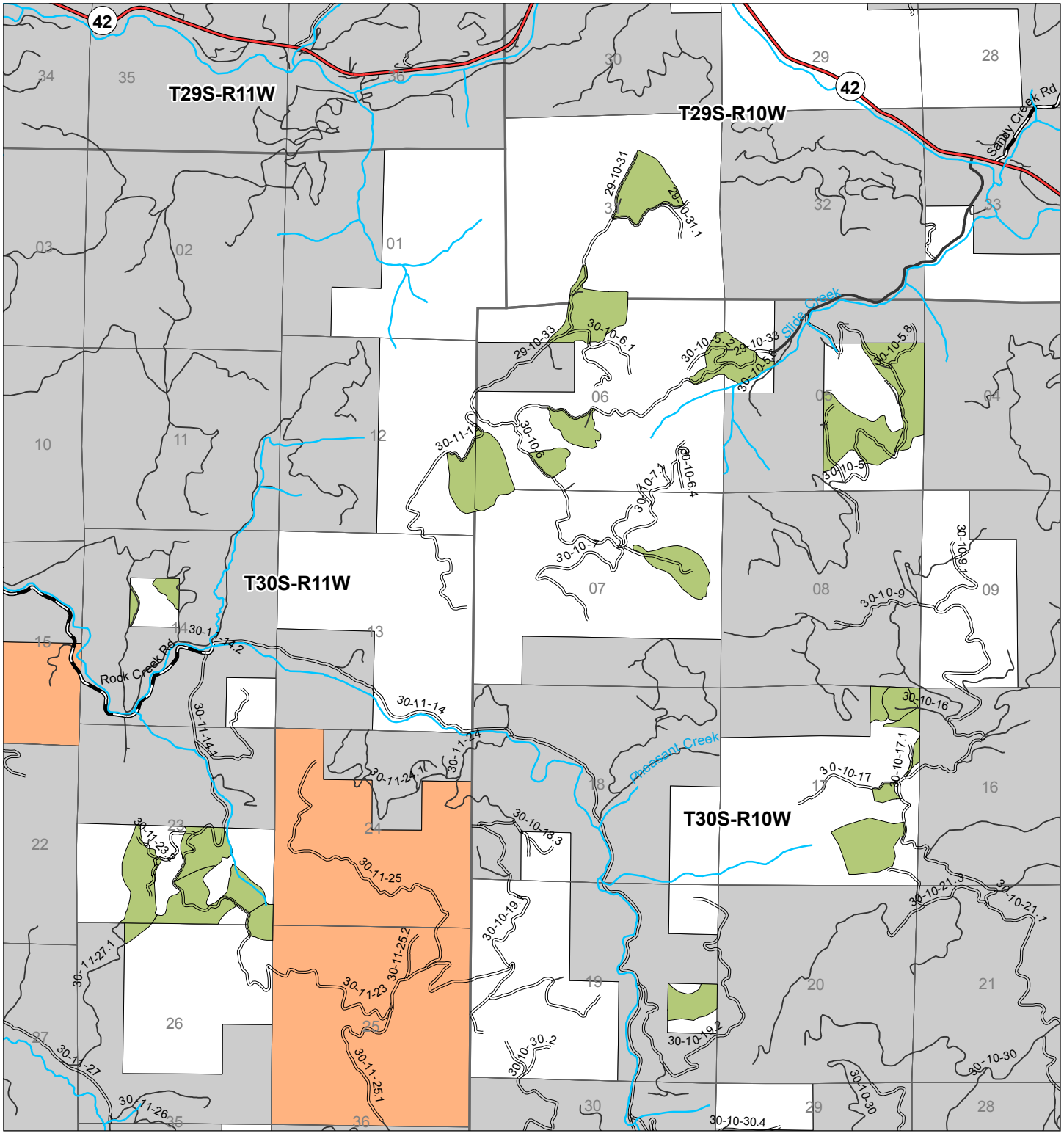
Scoping Map 3 of 3



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